

INFORMATION REPORT

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. In the fall of 1945 overt Soviet agents commenced propagandizing in Czech Ruthenia the economic and social advantages in store for those Ruthenians who would move to an area in the Ukraine known as Wolyn. This activity continued well into 1946. A surprising number of peasants fell for the scheme, and left for the USSR. Certain numbers were intimidated into accepting by dint of forceful talk on the part of the Soviet agents. Most of those who had left for the Wolyn area as of 1949 were of the poor class. None were forcibly moved.
2. President Benes previously had undermined the status of Ruthenians in a speech made immediately post World War II in which he promoted the idea of a Czechoslovakia made up of Czechs and Slovaks. A historical disaffection between the ethnic groups in Czechoslovakia aided the cause of Soviet agents who were working in Ruthenia.
3. The Wolyn area, of which Kovel, Ukraine, is the approximate center, was the location of many Czech farmers who had settled there in the 19th Century. They were occupied for the most part as hops raisers. In 1945 a great number returned to western Czechoslovakia. Shortly thereafter the Ruthenian emigres were resettled in the same area of Wolyn that the Czechs had vacated. About 40% of the population of Lukov (49°17'N - 21°04'E) moved to Wolyn. From other villages in area between Bardijov (49°17'N - 21°17'E) and Polish border about two thousand Ruthenians moved to Wolyn.
4. Correspondence between Ruthenians in Wolyn and their former homes was still possible in 1949. Letters mentioned that many Ruthenian youths had been drafted into the Red Army. They were disillusioned with their lot and likened it to that of the gypsies in their homeland. It was not known if the gypsy analogy was because of poor living conditions or itinerant employment, or both.
5. Little sympathy was lost on those who had gone to Wolyn. Remaining residents considered the emigres stupid for having left. In addition, returned members of General Svoboda's Army, who had served in the USSR, warned of the grim life there. The emigres did not heed the advice.
6. In a letter received [redacted] [redacted] mention was made of the vacant farm dwellings in Bardijov area. It is apparent that the area has not been repopulated since the departure of certain Ruthenians in 1946-1947. Farm dwellings have been collectivized into kolkhoses.

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